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MAYOR EMANUEL BREAKS GROUND ON SOUTH SIDE GARFIELD GATEWAY PROJECT

Major Project will Build on \$174 Million State Investment into Obama Presidential Center

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Chicago Transit Authority President Dorval R. Carter, Jr. today broke ground on the \$50 million Garfield Gateway project—a project that will make major improvements to the Garfield Green Line station, improving the transit experience for Chicagoans and creating a strong community focal point for the historic Washington Park community.

The Mayor also announced the State budget included \$174 million in funding to meet the transportation infrastructure needs related to the Obama Center, from road construction to traffic mitigation to pedestrian safety to parkland enhancement.

“The Obama Presidential Center will be a transformational project for Chicago’s south side, and this state funding demonstrates Illinois’ commitment to honoring the legacy of Chicago’s favorite son and daughter,” Mayor Emanuel said. “Today we are doubling down on that investment and turning an iconic station from an eyesore into a community asset that reflects Washington Park’s future.”

The Garfield Gateway project will improve the environment for commuters in a number of ways, including extending the platform canopies to provide more shelter; upgrading platform accessibility, including elevator and escalator improvements; and installing public art and landscaping to improve the daily customer experience. The project is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

In 2016, CTA received \$25 million in federal funding for the project through the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant program.

The project will also rehabilitate the original Garfield station house built in 1892 on the south side of Garfield Boulevard that is no longer in use by customers, but still owned by the CTA. The historic stationhouse, which earned City of Chicago landmark status in 2001, will be restored to its original turn-of-the-century look, and will receive improvements to allow it to serve a public purpose, such as a community space. The steel structure will receive new paint and LED lighting to illuminate the structure’s design.

The Garfield Gateway project complements a larger neighborhood revitalization effort that is now under way by community groups, property owners and the University of Chicago along Garfield Boulevard.

“Thanks to this project the Garfield Green Line station will be transformed into something the neighborhood can be proud of,” Ald. Pat Dowell said. “I look forward to getting the work done and cutting the ribbon.”

“CTA always seeks to create and enhance a sense of community when we build or renovate our rail stations,” President Carter said. “These facilities are far more than just places to catch a train or bus; they are travel hubs that frequently become part of the fabric of the communities we serve.”

In coordination with the Chicago Department of Transportation, the Garfield Gateway project will also include streetscape enhancements next to the station to better integrate existing transportation uses and create a stronger community centerpiece — including improved pedestrian street crossings, eco-friendly paving materials, median landscaping including sustainable native grasses and plants, bike lanes, benches and bike racks at the station.

The Garfield Gateway station is also a key component of the University of Chicago’s Arts + Public Life Initiative’s Arts Block project, led by renowned Chicago artist Theaster Gates. The project aims to boost Garfield Boulevard through cultural, civic and commercial spaces and programs. A \$1.8 million Arts Incubator was constructed in 2013 adjacent to the historic station house in an abandoned, historic two-story terra-cotta building.

The Garfield ‘L’ station serves nearly 425,000 riders each year and provides connections with the #55 Garfield bus, serving more than 3 million riders annually with direct connections to the University of Chicago and Midway International Airport.

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